

## heartburn

Plum pudding, mince-meat,

eggnog and eel — we say, 'Humbug!' And pass the Pepto.

Cover of Part 2



## IMPULSE

### 'Big Man On Campus'

David Sugarman, 22, says, " 'BMO' not only encapsulates everything wrong with television, but also society as a whole." B7

## TV PICKS

### Bigger than the Oscars?

It's the president and glitzy Kennedy Center honorees; judge for yourself.

Center of Part 2



## HEALTH

### The strength to be sociable

Holiday cheer is a challenge for the chronically ill.

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## NEW COMPETITION

# Upstart battling for bodega bucks

BY DEBORAH LYNN BLUMBERG  
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Move over, Goya black beans and mango juice. A new line of Latino products has hit Big Apple bodegas, offering consumers an alternative to imports from the Latino food giant, Goya Foods.

Phone cards and spices stamped with the new line's name — Mi Bodega — went on sale last week at more than 200 New York City stores, members of the Washington Heights-based Bodega Association of the United States, the organization that launched the brand.

The first bodega store-brand in the country, Mi Bodega is yet another reminder of the growing demand for Latino foods, experts said, as the number of Latino immigrants soars and their purchasing power increases.

"Ethnic foods have been ex-

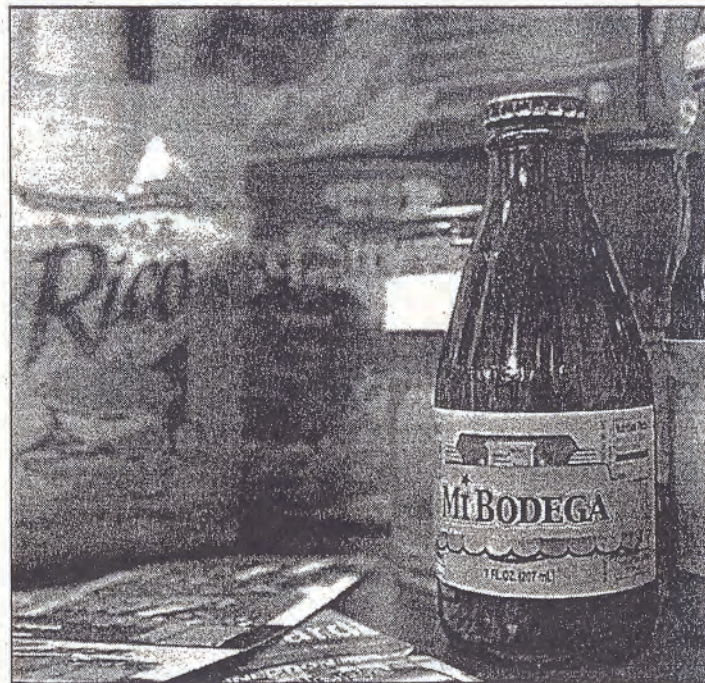


PHOTO BY JORI KLEIN

Mi Bodega founder José Fernandez hopes his new company, which specializes in selling food items popular among Latinos, will be popular in bodegas throughout the city.

See GOYA on A61

CORRECTIONS, AND HOW TO CONTACT NEWSDAY, PAGE A8

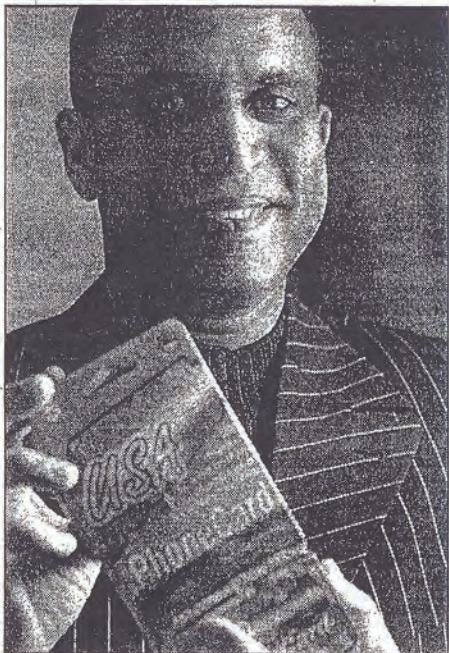


PHOTO BY JORI KLEIN

José Fernandez

# Upstart battles for bodega bucks

GOYA from A2

panding considerably in the last decade," said Todd Hultquist, spokesman for Washington-based Food Marketing Institute. "Mexicans, Brazilians and Dominicans are all different in their cuisine, and what retailers are learning is that as these populations grow there's not just one product that fits all. Goya products are not going to satisfy all customer needs."

Created to help raise additional funds for the bodega association's security program, which provides free surveillance cameras to stores in high-crime areas, the new brand will spread to the group's more than 7,200 member stores in New York City over the next six months, said José Fernandez, the organization's Dominican founder. The products will also help storeowners' bottom line, he said.

"Bodega owners have been waiting

for something like this," Fernandez said. "They know the bodega is the only type of store that doesn't have their own brand and have been complaining for years about prices from big corporations and warehouses. They see this as something very positive and profitable for their business."

Eighty-five percent of the association's member bodega owners are Latino, Fernandez said, as are many store customers. With the Mi Bodega line, recent immigrants searching city stores for foods from their home countries have another option.

But Secaucus, N.J.-based Goya isn't going anywhere. Bodegas will continue to sell Goya goods alongside Mi Bodega products, Fernandez said.

"Ninety percent of the products we're selling right now are not sold by Goya," he said. "We're not competing at all with Goya."

Goya spokesman Rafael Toro said he

heard talk of the new line but declined further comment.

Consumers should expect to see more than 20 new Latin American and Caribbean foods and beverages in their corner stores this year under the Mi Bodega name, Fernandez said, at prices lower than competing brands. The association partnered with foreign manufacturers to create the products, which are aimed at lowering the cost of certain goods for storeowners, increase profits and decrease prices for customers, he said.

"The bodega owner is beginning to sell his own products with his own name," said Ramon Murphy, an association member and the owner of three Manhattan bodegas.

In addition to selling bodega brand phone cards, foods and drinks, the association also plans to launch a pre-paid Mi Bodega MasterCard, Fernandez said, with which holders could transfer funds to their native country.